Programs of Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County Senior Services

Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers & The Oaks Adult Day

Newsletter

Spring 2016

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"I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden." ~ Ruth Stout

Hello Families,

Welcome to the new, quarterly newsletter for Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers (IVCP) and The Oaks Adult Day Program! Our goal is to bring you helpful tips for care-giving and stress reduction as well as community resources.

If you would like more program or volunteer information, please visit csswashtenaw.org or contact:

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IVCP NEWS

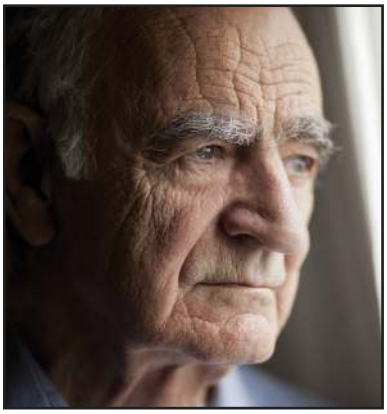
IVCP is excited to announce that we now have a **game and activity library** for volunteers to utilize. The library includes a number of board games, activities, and crafts to be checked out and enjoyed by your loved one and their volunteer. IVCP has also begun a periodic mailing of craft activities for volunteers to do with care-recipients. If you would like to be included in this mailing, please contact:

Samantha Larsen · 734.712.5730 · slarsen@csswashtenaw.org

This April, CSSW celebrated **National Volunteer Week** by creating videos showcasing a number of volunteers, including one from the IVCP program. To watch the volunteer videos, please visit csswashtenaw.org and click on the '2016 Volunteer Week' link on the left hand side.

Caregiving – A Stressful Calling

by Cheryl Hitchcock



Approximately 65 million Americans are caregivers to loved ones. These people, who care for loved ones without training as health care professionals, are in many cases forced to do so due to our aging population and changes in health care system. Whether an ill partner or child, or an aging parent without adequate insurance coverage for ongoing elder care, these family members may experience very high levels of caregiver stress.

While caring for a loved one who is unable to care for them self can be very fulfilling, it can also take a great toll on the caregiver, with a great deal of emotional and physical strain, known as caregiver stress. This stress can become debilitating to the caregiver as well, leading to the same stress related symptoms that all stress-out people feel: headaches, anxiety, depression, muscle tension or pain, restlessness, fatigue, over- or under-eating, sleeping problems, drug or alcohol abuse, social withdrawal, and emotional extremes – especially irritability or anger.

Symptoms of caregiver stress

Here are a few of the most common symptoms of caregiver stress, borrowed from the Mayo Clinic:

- Feeling tired most of the time
- Feeling overwhelmed and irritable
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Gaining or losing a lot of weight
- Losing interest in activities you used to enjoy

One of the most pernicious results of caregiver stress is – anger at the loved one for whom you are caring; the irrational feeling that he or she is denying you of a more fulfilling life because of their need for you to take care of them. This is a very dangerous symptom of caregiver stress, as it may lead to the neglect, or outright abuse, of your loved one.

How to deal with caregiver stress

The effects of out-of-control stress are dangerous for anyone, leading to a variety of health problems. For the caregiver though, this stress can be even more dangerous, as it may directly impact the care of the loved one for whom you've pledged your support. This can lead to even more stress, as you realize the care you've promised to give has been compromised.

Again from the Mayo clinic, there are things you can do to **help yourself deal with the stress** of being a caregiver:

- ***Accept help.*** Be prepared with a list of ways that others can help you, and let the helper choose what he or she would like to do.
- ***Focus on what you are able to provide***. Don't give in to guilt. Feeling guilty is normal, but understand that no one is a "perfect" caregiver. And you don't have to feel guilty about asking for help.
- ***Get connected.*** Organizations such as the Red Cross and the Alzheimer's Association offer classes on caregiving, and local hospitals may

have classes specifically about the disease your loved one is facing.

- **Join a support group.** A support group can be a great source for encouragement and advice from others in similar situations. It can also be a good place to make new friends.
- **Seek social support.** Make an effort to stay emotionally connected with family and friends. Set aside time each week for socializing, even if it's just a walk with a friend.
- **Set personal health goals.** For example, set a goal to find time to be physically active on most days of the week, or set a goal for getting a good night's sleep. It's also crucial to eat a healthy diet.
- **See your doctor.** Get recommended immunizations and screenings. Make sure to tell your doctor that you're a caregiver. Don't hesitate to mention any concerns or symptoms you have.

If you're the caregiver in your family, you must remember to set aside time for yourself – for self-care. Do not try to be perfect. Do not try to be all things to all people. Do the best you can for the ones you love, and ask for, and accept, help when needed.

And that's good enough.

Cheryl Hitchcock is an Author, Therapist, Coach, and Public Speaker. She works with the mind and the behaviours to overcome some of the most debilitating, negative, blocking behaviours that cause stress and stress related illnesses. Learn more at http://www.integritycounsellingservices.com.

Hitchcock, Cheryl. "Caregiving – A Stressful Calling." Elderly Care | ArticleBiz.com. ArticleBiz.com, n.d. Web. 04 May 2016. <http://www.articlebiz.com/article/1051592377-1-caregiving-a-stressful-calling/>.

Memory Cafes offer activities and entertainment for individuals with memory loss and those that care for them. The cafe creates opportunities to meet with other care givers, share stories and find support.

Joe's Memory Arts Café

Second Sunday of the month (Except May and June, which are the 3rd Sunday)

2pm-4pm

Towsley Health Building, 5361 McAuley Drive, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

RSVP appreciated but not required: Sandy Schmunk, 734.649.6806, or Susan Pettis, susan.pettis@trinity-health.org

StoryPoint Memory Matters Café

First Thursday of the month

2pm-4pm

StoryPoint Community, 6230 S. State Street, Saline, MI 48176

RSVP appreciated but not required: 734.944.6600

Linguine with Summer Vegetables & Goat Cheese

Ingredients

- 3/4 pound linguine
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups fresh corn (from 2 ears)
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 pints cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- 2 small zucchini (about 1 pound), cut into thin ribbons with a vegetable peeler
- 2 tablespoons fresh oregano leaves
- 4 ounces goat cheese, crumbled

Directions

1. Cook the pasta according to the package directions. Reserve ¾ cup of the cooking water; drain the pasta and return it to the pot.
2. Meanwhile, heat oven to 350° F. Spread the walnuts on a rimmed baking sheet and toast, tossing occasionally, until fragrant, 8 to 10 minutes.
3. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the corn, garlic, ¾ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper and cook, tossing occasionally, until the corn is tender, 2 to 4 minutes.
4. Add the cooked corn, tomatoes, zucchini, and ½ cup of the cooking water to the pot with the pasta. Cook over medium heat, gently tossing, until the liquid is slightly thickened and coats the pasta, 2 to 3 minutes (adding more cooking water as needed to loosen the sauce).
5. Serve sprinkled with the oregano, walnuts, and goat cheese.

Recipe & photo can be found at: http://bit.ly/1SZLnuY

Help for Caregivers

Do you have a loved one 18 or older with a cognitive, physical and/or mental disability who needs socialization? Do you need a break during the day? If so, The Oaks Adult Day Program may be a perfect fit for you!

The Oaks Adult Day program provides stimulating activities in a safe environment designed to improve social interaction and mental acuity for your loved one. Therapeutic activities include lively discussions, favorite movies, games, cooking, daily exercise, music and more. The Oaks Adult Day Program provides much needed respite for caregivers of these adults.

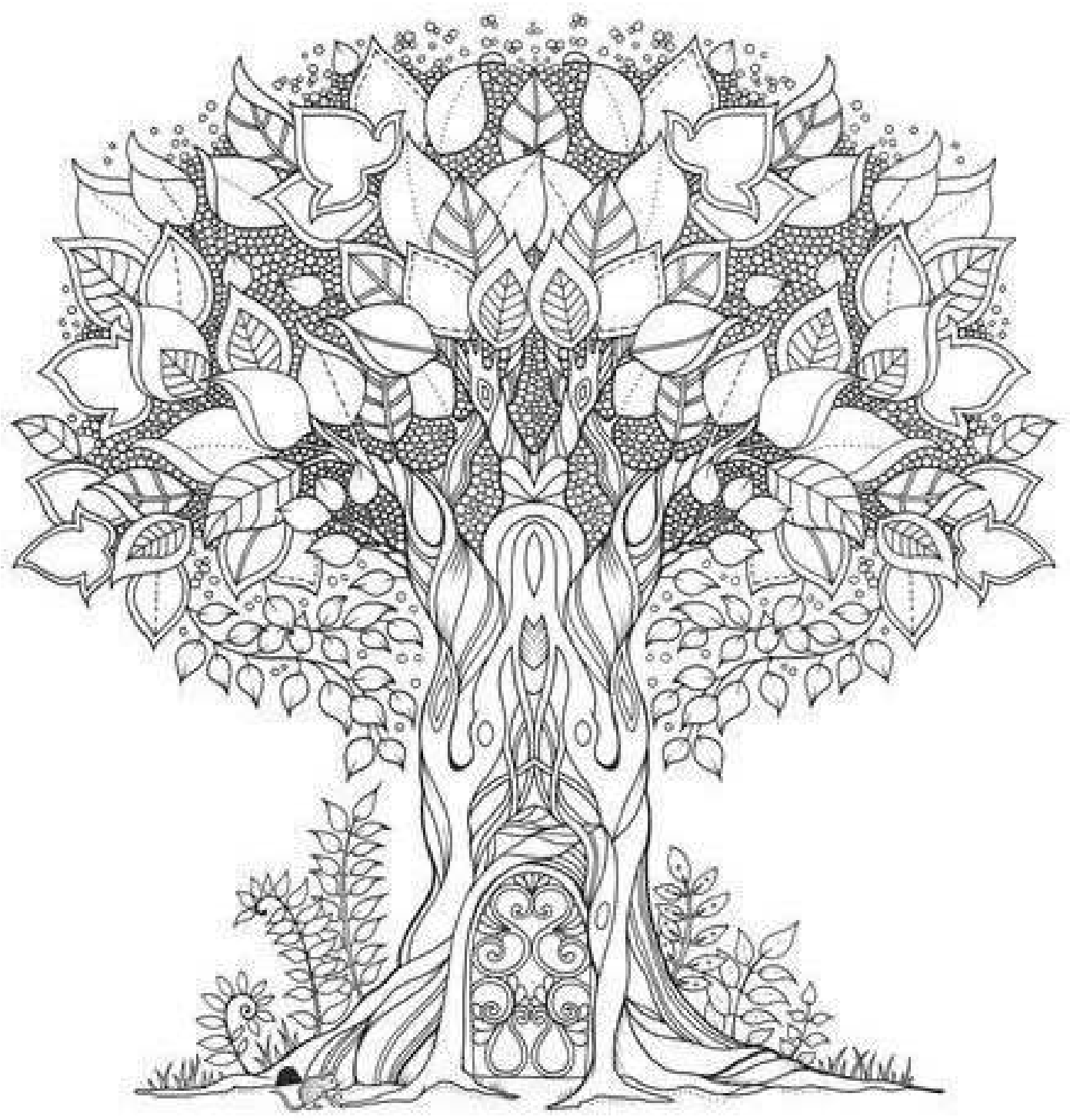
For more information, please contact Lisa Gdaniec at 734.662.4001 or lgdaniec@csswashtenaw.org.

STRESS RELIEF ACTIVITY

Adult oriented coloring pages and books have gained popularity as a stress relief tool. A Huffington Post Article by Elena Santos states, "coloring has a de-stressing effect because when we focus on a particular activity, we focus on it and not on our worries. But it also 'brings out our imagination and takes us back to our childhood, a period in which we most certainly had a lot less stress.'"

So pour yourself a cup of tea or coffee, and color away.

Article: Coloring Isn't Just For Kids. It Can Actually Help Adults Combat Stress. October 14th, 2014



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Join Us

Your support helps older adults live safely with dignity in their own homes. Vibrant community services are an affordable response to keep seniors independent while helping to alleviate the time commitment and financial burden for many families.

To donate, please contact Samantha Larsen at 734.712.5730, visit csswashtenaw.org, or send your donation to:

Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County,
Towsley Health Building - Senior Services Department
P.O. Box 995
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

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